LISTING OF CLAIMS

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) A method for controlling the delivery of notifications comprising:

receiving a notification from a first notification sender; ~~and~~

in response to receiving the notification, controlling the delivery of the notification in accordance with one or more user contexts that have been set by one or more context setters;

receiving a test notification call from an application; and

responding to said test notification call with information identifying whether a notification from said application would be displayed based on said one or more contexts, if said application were to request a notification.

Claim 2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein a user context comprises a condition that may be in first or second states, and an instruction that is to be followed if the condition is in the first state.

Claim 3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the condition of at least one of the user contexts relates to whether or not the user is at least partially visually occupied, and the associated instruction restricts the delivery of notifications in terms of their visual display.

Claim 4. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the condition of at least one of the user contexts relates to whether or not the user is at least partially occupied by sound, and

the associated instruction restricts the delivery of notifications in terms of their volume.

Claim 5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein a plurality of user contexts that are associated with a specified user are set by a plurality of context setters.

Claim 6. (Currently Amended) A method for setting a user context comprising:

receiving at least one user context from at least one context setter; ~~and~~

in response to receiving the at least one user context, setting the user context such that the delivery of incoming notifications for the user from a plurality of sources will be controlled according to the user context; and

in response to a change in context, sending proactive context change data to one or more application programs that have registered with said context setter, said context change data informing said registered application programs of the change in context to reduce subsequent generation of unwanted notification requests.

Claim 7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein a user context comprises a condition that may be in first or second states, and an instruction that is to be followed if the condition is in the first state.

Claim 8. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the condition of at least one user context relates to whether or not the user is at least partially visually occupied, and the associated instruction restricts the delivery of notifications in terms of their visual display.

Claim 9. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the condition of at least one user context relates to whether or not the user is at least partially occupied by sound, and the associated instruction restricts the delivery of notifications in terms of their volume.

Claim 10. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the condition of at least one user context relates to whether or not the user is unavailable for receiving notifications of any kind, and the associated instruction restricts the delivery of notifications altogether.

Claim 11. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein at least one of the context setters is an operating system.

Claim 12. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein at least one of the context setters is a program other than an operating system.

Claim 13. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein a set of rules are defined by a user to dictate how notifications that contain at least a first specified element should be delivered.

Claim 14. (Currently Amended) One or more computer-readable media storing computer-executable instructions for enabling a notification sending computer-program segment to communicate with one or more other computer-program segments, said ~~media~~ instructions comprising:

~~a set of computer-usable~~ instructions ~~that cause~~for causing a request to deliver a notification for a user from a notification sending computer-program segment to be communicated to one or more other computer-program segments capable of executing said request, wherein the delivery of the notification is controlled in accordance with one or more user contexts, and wherein said delivery includes playing an audio portion of said notification with a volume adjusted based on said one or more user contexts.

Claim 15. (Currently Amended) The media of claim 14, wherein a user context comprises a condition that may be in first or second states~~,~~ and identifies an instruction that is to be followed if the condition is in the first state.

Claim 16. (Currently Amended) The media of claim 14, wherein ~~the instruction of~~ the user context indicates that selected notifications should be at least one of routed, denied, deferred, ~~or~~ and delivered.

Claim 17. (Currently Amended) The media of claim 14, wherein ~~the instruction of~~ the user context indicates that selected notifications should be restricted in terms of their visual display.

Claim 18. (Currently Amended) The media of claim 14, wherein ~~a plurality of~~said user contexts ~~that~~ are associated with a specified user and are set by a plurality of context setters.

Claim 19. (Currently Amended) The media of claim 14, wherein the computer-executable instructions further ~~comprising~~ define rules that dictate how notifications that contain at least a first specified element should be delivered~~, and which provides exceptions to the instructions of the user contexts~~.

Claims 20-26. (Canceled)

Claim 27. (Currently Amended) A method of communicating between a plurality of notification senders and a notification processing system comprising:

the plurality of notification senders ~~issue~~ issuing calls for sending notifications to a user; and

the notification processing system ~~receives~~ receiving the calls and ~~processes~~ processing the notifications in accordance with one or more user contexts, wherein at least one of said one or more user contexts identifies a plurality of conditions, each condition having a plurality of states, and an instruction to be followed for each state of said conditions, wherein at least one instruction indicates whether a requested notification will be permitted to overlay information displayed on said user's visual display.

Claim 28. (Canceled)

Claim 29. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 27, wherein one of said conditions relates to whether or not the user is at least partially visually occupied, and the associated instruction is for restricting ~~restricts~~ the delivery of notifications in terms of their visual

display.

Claim 30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 27, wherein the condition of at least one user context relates to whether or not the user is at least partially occupied by sound, and the associated instruction ~~restricts~~ is for restricting the delivery of notifications in terms of their volume.

Claim 31. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 27, wherein the condition of at least one user context relates to whether or not the user is unavailable for receiving notifications of any kind, and the associated instruction ~~restricts~~ is for restricting the delivery of notifications altogether.

Claim 32. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 27, wherein ~~a plurality of~~of the one or more user contexts that are associated with a specified user are set by a plurality of different context setters.

Claim 33. (Currently Amended) A method of communicating between a context setter and a notification processing system comprising:

the context setter ~~issues~~ issuing a call for setting a user context identifying a state of a user's visual ~~or aural~~ occupation; and

the notification processing system ~~receives~~ receiving the call and ~~sets~~ setting the user context so that future notifications are ~~processed in accordance with the user's visual or aural occupation~~displayed in a reduced portion of said user's visual display.

Claim 34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33, further comprising the step of receiving a request for a notification having both visual and audio components, and restricting one of said visual and audio components from said notification based on said user context.

Claim 35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33, wherein the user context indicates that selected notifications should be at least one of routed, denied, deferred, or delivered.

Claim 36. (Currently Amended) One or more computer-readable media storing computer-executable instructions for performing the following steps:

establishing a plurality of user-defined conditional rules for handling incoming notifications, said rules identifying a state of computer system resources and one or more permissible notification actions based on said state of computer system resources;

providing a plurality of application program interfaces for requesting notifications to a computer user, wherein a first of said interfaces is offered as part of a system shell and results in a notification to said user in response to being called, and wherein a call using a second one of said interfaces is a test notification interface that does not result in a notification to said user in response to said call, but results in a response identifying ~~a context of said user~~whether a notification would be displayed if requested by an application calling said second interface; and

in response to a call made using said first interface, applying one or more of said rules to provide a notification to said user.

Claim 37. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable media of claim 36, wherein said state of computer system resources identified by one or more of said rules reflects an amount of a computer system display's screen that is available.

Claim 38. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable media of claim 37, further comprising instructions to withhold a video portion of an incoming notification when said computer display is operating in full-screen mode.

Claim 39. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable media of claim 36, wherein said state of computer system resources identified by one or more of said rules reflects whether audio resources of the computer system are in use.

Claim 40. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable media of claim 39, further comprising instructions to withhold an audio portion of an incoming notification when said audio resources are in use.

Claim 41. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable media of claim 40, further comprising instructions to permit a video portion of said incoming notification when said audio resources are in use.

Claim 42. (Previously Presented) The one or more computer-readable media of claim 39, further comprising instructions to adjust a volume of an audio portion of said incoming notification when said audio resources are in use.